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Comments: Comments regarding

Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest Draft EIS

Wilderness

Although Alternative W provides for the largest number of acres for additional wilderness, I believe this is the best option. 20-30 years from now it will almost certainly be more difficult to designate additional land as wilderness. In the future it will also be more environmentally important to have more wilderness land.

Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers

Alternative Z has the wisest approach to wild and scenic rivers. The water quality and overall benefits of the largest rivers in the Nez-Perce-Clearwater NF can best be preserved only when the water quality of the major tributaries of these rivers are maintained. This can best be accomplished when the majority of these tributaries are designated as wild and scenic rivers. If the water quality of the tributaries declines, it would take decades to restore the water quality and overall benefits of the major rivers in the national forest. Reversing detrimental changes that had occurred would be difficult and costly to accomplishing and would be more difficult institute politically.

Motorized Access

Changes to the Idaho Roadless Rule that allow for increased motorized and non-motorized use should be considered and/or made only with extreme caution. Once changes are made in the Idaho Roadless Rule, further changes will inevitably occur and will probably do so at an accelerated rate.

Safety is a crucial and often overlooked issue. Near my home is a mountain that has long been used by hikers. Not many years ago bicycles and motorcycles began to use the mountain. Hikers going up the mountain can (and do) come around a curve in the trail to be confronted by a bicycle rider coming down the narrow trail at a high rate of speed. The cyclist is unable to stop. Often there is not room for either party to get off the trail quickly. Similar dynamics occur with motorcycles, with the exception that the hiker can hear the motorcycle in advance.

Damage done to landscape by wheels, both motorized and non-motorized, is significant. This damage dramatically increases erosion. Often this damage is both permanent and self-perpetuating. If an area used by wheels is restricted to wheel use, it takes 1-2 generations for the land to return to its previous health.

The relatively recent uses of bicycles and motorcycles on the mountain near my home have resulted in changes that can be seen are visible from a distance. Numerous trails are now visible from more than half a mile away, with the result that the mountain looks scarred. Previously the few trails that existed were not visible from a distance.

Alternatives W, X, and Z all continue summer motorized use at or slightly above the current level. Alternative W is the only plan that significantly decreases the percentage of land that can be used in the winter. The use of motorized vehicles in the winter is detrimental to wildlife at the time when animals are most stressed. A winter 50-50 balance between what is desirable for humans and best for animals seems a reasonable option. Alternative

W is the alternative that comes closest to this balance.

Timber Sales

It is disappointing that none of the Alternative Plans have a timber sale projection midway between proposal W/X and proposal Y. The potential contribution to income between W/X and Y is relatively minor (15-20%) compared to the projected timber sales (50-58%). It may be wise to consider a projected timber sale higher than Alternative Y but lower than Alternatives W and X.

Whatever timber sale is chosen, reforestation is an important consideration. It should be required and funded by the companies which do the harvesting.

Potential Jobs Supported and Contribution to Income

Alternative Y has an increase in jobs of 42.5% over the No Action level and an increase in contribution to income of 44.5%. It would be helpful for the rural communities if these numbers could be closer to 55-60% (5583-5792 jobs and \$226.3-233.6 potential income) of the No Action level.

Overriding consideration

The vast majority of those of us whose ancestors immigrated to this country within the last several centuries make decisions based on what we think is best for us now or what we think is best for our children/grandchildren. Native Americans have lived on, been dependent on, and respected the land for thousands of years. For hundreds of years some of these tribes have made decisions about the land and its resources based on what they believed would be best for their people seven generations from the time the decision was made.

It will be best for both current and future generations if the proposal chosen for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests is based on seven generations wisdom.